



A Study of the Network Function
of the
Child Survival Collaboration and Resources Group
(CORE)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Child Survival Collaborations and Resources (CORE) Group was formed in 1997 in response to the need for a sectoral network that would facilitate collaboration and strengthen Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO) capacity as providers of child survival services. The United States Agency for International Development, Bureau of Humanitarian Response, Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (USAID/BHR/PVC) funded the development of this network as a means to strengthen PVO capacity in a cost-effective manner. CORE currently has 36 member organizations. All members have participated in USAID's Child Survival Grants Program. Many of these organizations not only have programs in child survival and maternal health but also in economic development, education, democracy building and environment. Collectively its member organizations have a presence in more than 140 countries. In 1997 combined revenues exceeded \$1.6 billion.

The goal of CORE is to assist member organizations to reduce child and maternal mortality by improving the health of under-served populations. CORE represents its member PVOs and seeks to promote coordination and collaboration between the member organizations as well as with outside agencies. It provides a networking function, which facilitates learning between organizations and also plays an advocacy role in promoting the work of these organizations to donors, agencies, corporations, universities and the general public. CORE has working relationships with USAID and other cooperating agencies. CORE is governed by a 12 member Board of Directors, elected from its member organizations and employs two full-time staff members.

The operational objectives of the CORE cooperative agreement are to:

1. Establish CORE as a viable and sustainable PVO coordination entity for the improvement of primary health care in developing countries.
2. Enhance technical knowledge and skills of CORE members related to primary health care with a special focus on maternal and child health.
3. Facilitate technical exchange between CORE membership and other interested PVOs.
4. Advance national and global policies and practices to improve maternal and child health programs within and outside the PVO community via coordination and support of CORE working groups.
5. Strengthen partnerships between USAID and CORE members.
6. Develop and maintain communication channels to raise public awareness of Child Survival activities.

This study forms part of a larger analytic study, which seeks to illustrate the innovative approaches that PVC has used to build PVO capacity. The study looks at the networking function of CORE and documents the effects it has had on strengthening the capacity of PVO members as providers of child survival and maternal health services. The study looks at the benefits to PVOs of participation in the network and the impact of the network in building technical and operational capacity of the PVO members.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out over a period of 15 days in February 2000. A conceptual framework was developed that could be used to direct interviews by phone or email. This consisted of both closed and open-ended questionnaires. Several questionnaires were developed in order to elicit information from different groups (see Annex A). Selected participant organizations were contacted by email and informed about the purpose of the survey. The email contained an introduction to the purpose of the survey. In most cases selected organizations were contacted one week later to set up a time for a telephone or face-to-face interview. Telephone interviewing was determined to be the fastest and most effective way to elicit information given the time constraints for this study. In two cases participants responded by electronic mail due to travel.

A sample of 23 PVO member organizations was taken for interviews. The sample was weighted to ensure representation from different size organizations and by location. In addition four representatives of cooperating agencies, six USAID employees, two representatives from international organizations (UNICEF and PAHO) and two consultants were interviewed.

GROUP	METHODOLOGY	No. INTERVIEWED
Member Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs)	E-mail/Face to Face and telephone interviews	23
Independent Consultants	Telephone interviews	2
USAID employees	E-mail/telephone interviews	6
International Organizations	Telephone interviews	2
CORE staff PEI (Polio Initiative)	Face to face Face to face	2
Cooperating Agencies (CAs)	E-mail/telephone interviews	4

The sample is not statistically representative and it should be noted that the information presented below is not statistically significant. In many instances statements cannot be directly linked to CORE. In interpreting qualitative statements it should be noted that qualitative data could not be aggregated or quantified to describe a population as a whole. The findings should therefore be viewed as important evidence of impact and trends. It should be noted that the terms 'CORE Group' and 'CORE Group Network' or 'CORE Network' are used interchangeably.

3. RESULTS OF CLOSED QUESTIONS TO PVO MEMBERS

Question	N	Category	Number	Percent
Active in CORE group	N=23	Organization	17	80
New to CORE	N=23	Organization	4	17
Member of Board or Executive Committee (current)	N=28	Individual	8	N/A
Member of Working Group (specify which one(s))	N=28	Individual	20	71
Chair of Working Group (current)	N=28	Individual	6	22
Attended Annual Meetings	N=23	Organization	21	91
Presented at CORE meetings	N=28	Individual	19	68
Used CORE publications/website/emails	N=23	Organization	23	100
Utilized CORE network to access technical information	N=23	Organization	21	91
Used technical materials/models from presentations or Working Groups	N=23	Organization	18	78

Note: Twenty-three PVO member organizations were interviewed. However in some organizations more than one person was interviewed. The total number of individuals interviewed totaled 28.

3.1 Analysis of Results

A large proportion of the PVO CORE members interviewed reported that they were active in CORE. There was a link between being and very active and coming from a large PVO. There was also some correlation between the PVO location and level of involvement. Those who reported little activity in CORE were in all but one case the members that were new to CORE and they noted that they hoped to become more engaged in CORE. Involvement in the working groups was high. A high proportion of the current Chairs of working groups were represented in the sample. A very significant number reported attending CORE annual meetings. Even new members to CORE had attended the last annual meeting. Many individual members reported having prepared and given presentations of various kinds at CORE events. All organizations reported using CORE's website, publications, mailings and emails. This is clearly significant. Even those who are not active or not yet active are making use of the network in some way. The same is true for the number reporting using CORE to access resources and technical information. This is expanded upon below. PVO members are clearly using the network to find out what is going on and to get information when they need it.

4. BENEFITS TO THE PVOS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE CORE NETWORK

4.1 Sharing Ideas, Networking and Peer Support

All PVO respondents noted that the opportunity to share information and network with fellow PVOS in the CORE Group was one of the key benefits of being in the CORE network. For new PVOS, joining the network gave them ready access to a wealth of technical, country and other information. Other PVO members were considered invaluable resources to build up capacity. Prior to CORE many PVOS simply did not have the kind of access to people, resources and material that they have now. Several members noted that it is hard to quantify the tremendous value and impact of networking, collaboration, sharing and peer support. Several board members reiterated this and noted that this is one of CORE's key missions, to provide a forum to allow PVOS to get to know others who can act as resources. The sharing of information has had ripple effects that have by many accounts had impact on the way DIPs, proposals and field programs are conducted.

The Networking Benefits of CORE to PVOS

"CORE has been very valuable in terms of allowing us to network, share ideas and communicate with our peers. We have certainly learned a great deal by participating in the network and this has undoubtedly helped us build our capacity operationally and technically." (PVO Member)

"As a new recipient of a child survival grant, it was extremely beneficial for us to have a ready network of resources to tap into. It was also very useful to understand the workings of USAID and to be introduced to all the right players... We have been able to make numerous contacts and establish some useful working relationships....people at CORE have been most helpful and friendly and this has been a great help to getting us started" (Concern Worldwide)

CORE has succeeded in changing attitudes. Sharing of information between agencies...PVO members, CAs and USAID used to be 'corporate espionage'. Now information is shared quite freely and this has been advantageous to everyone. Now the competition is healthier and I think CORE has helped us all keep our focus on what we are all really trying to achieve...improved child survival interventions that have impact in the communities we serve. (Jay Edison, ADRA)

CORE is an equalizer of PVOS. Irrespective of size and experience all organizations in the network can benefit. CORE has enabled PVOS to share information and the network has lessened the competition that kept the work of many PVOS a secret...The success of CORE is attributable to the fact that the PVOS initiated the concept of the CORE network themselves. (PVO Member)

4.2 Communication

CORE has established a number of communications channels (website, e-mail listserv, periodic mailings and conference calls). Members reported using these often. A few PVOS said they seek staff or consultants through these channels, although much of this is done via inter-agency relationships established through the network. Members on the West Coast reported that e-mail and conference calling were important for enabling them to keep contact. One West Coast

member said, *“before CORE we did not feel it was worth the effort to be involved in things in Washington. But we thought it was worthwhile being involved in CORE. We use e-mail and conference calling to keep in touch. Last year we hosted the Annual Meeting”*.

A large number of respondents (91%) reported attending at least one CORE annual meeting, although attendance is reported to be declining and may be symptomatic of the reported fatigue among members of attending too many meetings in too short a time.

4.3 Working Group Participation

CORE currently has seven working groups focusing on key areas of technical importance to PVOs (Safe Motherhood, Nutrition, Behavioral Change, Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Evaluation and Malaria). Working groups are formed to be in existence whilst they fulfill a purpose. Their primary purpose of the Working Groups, according to the members is to identify needs and interests of PVO members, document experiences and lessons learned, facilitate information flow and organize workshop and events. Working groups have a Chair and a workplan, which is posted on the website. Conference calls enable those who cannot participate for location reasons the chance to participate in the working groups. The working groups are seen as an important collaborative effort and were generally seen as a success by respondents across the board. Working groups have been particularly successful when a specific product or activity has been the output. Cooperating agencies noted that the working groups presented a forum for them to engage technically with PVOs. Participants of working groups noted that they had learned a tremendous amount through working and discussions with their peers. One member said that the working groups allowed her organization to develop professionally *“ the Groups present a staff development opportunity in terms of promoting management, team-building and leadership skills.*

Seventy-one percent of respondents were involved in one or more working groups. Some were more active than others were. Those who were not involved reported that it was a function of time, location or resistance from their employer. Seventy-eight percent reported that they have accessed tools, materials or peer models and used these in their programs. Many cited the technical benefits of participating in the working groups. Members who were not participants also reporting benefiting from the outputs of the working groups and from feedback from participants through the CORE grapevine.

Benefits and Impact of Working Groups

“Many of the working groups have been extremely successful in compiling excellent resources and tools for practical use in the field. These tools are so useful because they have been developed with a lot of PVO input. The working groups have also built bridges to the cooperating agencies to develop materials.... The Safe Motherhood/Reproductive Health Working Group has worked systematically with partners in cooperating agencies to develop standardized indicators for safe motherhood. We have developed several widely used tools and tested models in the field. We will be taking much of this to the field in a workshop in Kenya in May.” Mary Beth Powers (Save the Children)

5. IMPACT OF THE NETWORK IN BUILDING TECHNICAL CAPACITY

5.1 Access to Technical Information

Ninety-one percent of respondents had accessed technical information through the network. Many members reported not only better access to technical information, materials and resources, but also the opportunities to share their own technical expertise and learn from the models and project lessons of others. The building of technical capacity among PVOs in the network has helped promote PVOs technical capacity and given them a stronger voice on technical issues. The increased desire to share information has provided PVOs an opportunity to discuss technical aspects of their projects and gain greater insights on how to tackle what one member referred to as the “tough technical problems”.

At the same time PVOs have the opportunity to highlight the work of their organization and to better present their knowledge and skills. For small PVOs with a specific technical expertise (such as La Leche League-breastfeeding or Helen Keller-micronutrients) or a specific country expertise (such as Andean Rural Health in Bolivia), the network has proven a valuable opportunity to present their particular strengths. One Member PVO noted that *“CORE has been widely credited for greatly improving the technical capacity among PVOs and this credit is justified”*.

Access To Technical Information through the CORE Network

“Our programs would be awful if we hadn’t had the benefits of joining CORE. We simply would not have had the access to state-of-the-art technical information without our links through CORE. Much of the information we have gleaned has had direct practical value.” (PVO Member)

“The CORE Group has offered invaluable health technical resources, collegial support and has given us an avenue to dialogue with major players working in international health and maternal child health. Speaking from the perspective of a mid-sized PVO with only one health technical staff, the CORE Group is providing critical technical support and resources which allow us to strengthen not only our Child Survival projects but our broader health sector as well” (Karla Percy, Mercy Corps International-quoted in the CORE flyer)

5.2 Using Materials Developed by Working Groups

A large number of PVOs sampled (78%) reported making use of materials and tools developed through the working groups. Many of the tools used are thought by members to be useful because they have been developed with significant PVO input. Several tools/materials were repeatedly mentioned as having a significant impact on project development, planning and implementation and changes in technical focus:

Example 1. The KPC Survey Revision: M&E Working Group

The Knowledge, Practice and Coverage Survey (KPC) has widely been adopted as a project management and planning tool since it was developed in 1991 by the Child Survival Support Program at Johns Hopkins University. Recipients of Child Survival grants are obliged to carry out the survey. PVO members of CORE felt that the survey was dated and in need of revision to make it practically applicable and relevant. The CORE Monitoring and Evaluation Group took on this task. In collaboration with CSTS, issues of cost-effectiveness, efficiency and statistical validity of sampling were analyzed. The survey was converted into a modular format making it adaptable to varying projects. New questions were developed for areas not covered by the old survey such as malaria and HIV/AIDs. The survey is currently being field-tested and a great deal of input has been received from PVOs. (Jay Edison, ADRA -KPC Review Task Force Leader)

“The revised KPC survey has been an extremely valuable output from the M&E Working Group in collaboration with CSTS. It has been compiled with a lot of PVO input and will have significant repercussions at field level because it is a requirement for all recipients of Child Survival grants and the results are presented in our DIPS”. PVO Member

Example 2. The Integrated Health Facility Assessment

Following a Health Facilities Assessment Tools Workshop last year held in collaboration with Child Survival Technical Support (CSTS) and BASICS, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) working group is developing an assessment tool appropriate for use by PVOs in the field that combines questions on child, maternal and reproductive health, FP and HIV/AIDS/STIs with guidelines for questions use. Experts reviewed sections of the tool. The tool is currently being field-tested. Dissemination workshops in collaboration with CSTS will provide HQ training in the application of the tool. (Vijay Rao-MCDI)

“We had a planning grant for Madagascar. As part of preparation for the DIPs we had to do a health facilities assessment and a KPC survey.... If CORE didn't exist we would have had a really hard time drawing up the necessary questionnaires. Because of CORE these tools have been revised and it was enormously helpful to be able to access these tools and people who could help us implement them. PVO Member

Example 3. Effective Strategies for Promoting Quality Maternal and Newborn Care

The Safe Motherhood/Reproductive health Working Group has worked avidly to dispel ineffective practices and to promote more effective interventions and best practices to reduce maternal mortality. We have worked with partners at Linkages, BASICS, MotherCare and others to develop better indicators for safe motherhood. Mary Beth Powers-Save the Children

“We have repeatedly used the tool ‘Effective strategies for Promoting Maternal and Newborn Care’ both at HQ and in the field”. PVO Member

The manual by CARE (Promoting Quality Maternal and Newborn Care) has been our Bible in the field. We have sent it to all our field staff”. PVO Member

Example 4. Health Education in Primary Health Care Projects

The BCC Working Group has moved the area of theory into the practical realm and appreciated the need for tools that can help staff, (many with medical backgrounds), deal with the community health education aspects of their Child Survival program. We have developed critical review of health education approaches-‘Health Education in Primary Health Care Projects-A Critical Review of Various Approaches’. We have also developed a tool called ‘What to Look For During a Monitoring Visit’. Olga Wollinka-World Relief.

We have used the Health Education publication a lot and have sent it to many others in our organization around the world. It successfully combines theory and practice.” Concern Worldwide

5.3 Impact of Workshops and Conferences

PVO respondents reported that workshops and conferences they had participated in had ripple effects in building technical capacity within their organizations. Respondents noted that these events served to:

- Increase the profile of PVOs
- Present an opportunity to present PVO field experiences and knowledge
- Develop partnerships with USAID, CAs and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies
- Receive updates on state-of-the art technical information

Example 1. The IMCI Conference

CORE, in collaboration with USAID, BASICS, PAHO, UNICEF and WHO, held a meeting in Washington in February 1999, to promote collaboration in child health. The meeting sought to review the accomplishments of PVOs in integrated child health programming, identify the comparative advantages of PVOs in the further development and implementation of IMCI and make recommendations to further strengthen future collaboration. This high-level conference helped to put CORE on the map. The voice of PVOs in pushing forward community-based IMCI with direct practical field application. It reportedly had many positive repercussions and raised the profile of US PVOs engaged in child health. PVO members, USAID and the CA community corroborated this. One PVO member reported that “*following the IMCI conference many technical materials were made available that we have systematically used in our programs. For example we use the community-based IMCI model in our Peru Child Survival project*”.

Leveraging Funds for Community-based IMCI

The Global Bureau contributed funding to the IMCI Working Group to support CORE member involvement in the global IMCI initiative. BASICS has also given funds to support the testing of community-based IMCI in the field and operational research. We are also planning a workshop in Uganda in collaboration with BASICS to launch community-based IMCI in the region. (Larry Casazza-World Vision)

Leading the Agenda in IMCI-Effecting Change and Engaging in Policy Dialogue

The IMCI Conference and subsequent report succeeded in getting CORE on policy documents. Community-based IMCI was something where all parties realized the importance of PVO engagement –because they are the grassroots connection.....CORE can now have a seat at the policy table at WHO, UNICEF and PAHO. This will be very valuable at country and regional level. It is extraordinarily rare to see PVOs invited to policy meetings at the level currently being discussed. (Karen LeBan, BASICS and Larry Casazza, World Vision)

Example 2. The Micronutrient Conference

In May 1998, the CORE Group Nutrition Working Group with support from USAID/PVC and PHN through the OMNI, Linkages and MotherCare projects and PAHO and Hoffman-La Roche - hosted a groundbreaking conference in Washington “The Path to Maternal Child Health: The PVO Role in Improving Iron and Vitamin A Status”. The conference sought to increase the impact of PVOs’ micronutrient programs. Sixteen CORE PVO field participants from many locations including Honduras, Kenya and Nepal came to learn and contribute invaluable field insight. Seven representatives from the Russian health system attended to set up their own action plan for implementing a micronutrient strategy into their national strategy. Private industry was also represented. The predominant producers of Vitamin A - Hoffman-La Roche and BASF talked about the cost and availability of supplements. A plan to guide future activities between PVOs and industry was developed during a working group.

Comments from CORE PVOs on the Micronutrient Conference

“The nutrition conference was wonderful. It created a refreshing dialogue in state-of the art technical knowledge. I identified technical resources for future use and savored the wide variety of participants”.

“We brought a nutritionist from Zambia to attend the micronutrient conference. He got a tremendous benefit from it and this is definitely having an impact on practical application”.

“This conference was valuable because it addressed PVO issues. I have been to so many meetings and conferences where the presentations just have no relevance to PVOs work in the field. This combined theory and practice beautifully.”

5.4 Increased Access to Technical Inputs and Materials from Cooperating Agencies/USAID

It is difficult to quantify increases in the numbers of CORE PVOs receiving technical assistance from CAs or USAID. There is considerable anecdotal evidence of collaboration with CAs where interests mutually converge. The two conferences cited above are examples of such collaboration. Cooperating agencies also interact with CORE through the working groups. The Safe Motherhood Working Group has built bridges to the CA community. The group has worked

with MotherCare, Linkages, MACRO and BASICS. Cooperating agencies and USAID have been invited to attend the BCC planning committee for a workshop planned for April.

Some of the CAs interviewed noted that there is an increased access to their materials because of the general opening up of information flow, which many attribute in part to CORE. Linkages noted that they have received far more requests for certain tools such as the tool on breastfeeding and HIV/AIDS because CORE through the working groups has made people more aware of what is available. CORE keeps its members abreast of the numerous tools that have been developed by CAs and the international health community in the quarterly publication “The CORE Group Update”. There are situations where the CA’s have an expertise that the CORE PVOs can utilize. Linkages noted that they had given presentations to CORE members on HIV.

Some CORE PVO members sampled thought the CA’s had “too much money”, that the benefit for collaboration was “mostly on their side” that some CAs “took PVO best practices and models and put their name on them”.

The CAs noted that CORE had done much to strengthen synergy and that this has been positive. The Global Bureau also noted that if PVOs can work in synergy, then they can better work towards developing a policy agenda and the standardization of tools and practices at national level. Standardization is clearly something that PVOs are striving for through the development of tools through the working groups.

BASICS PVO Liaison (Karen LeBan) noted “it is hard to work with PVOs on everything. Different mandates sometimes make this difficult. There is much evidence of an improved relationship. I know that the PVO community thinks cooperating agencies only want to work with PVOs to further their own agendas. It makes sense to collaborate where there is overlap and the agenda is of mutual interest such as community-based IMCI”

Both USAID and CAs agreed without doubt that the technical capacity of PVOs has improved in recent years and that CORE has played an important role in this. Many noted that the technical expertise in the PVO community is of the highest caliber and that there is a great respect for CORE as an organization representing its PVO members and that CORE is playing an important role in promoting the PVOs contribution is in child survival. Many noted that CORE could do a better job in communicating what PVOs are actually doing. It may be that the members have a good idea of what each other are doing, but that this could be better promoted to other stakeholders. Both PVOs and CAs and USAID noted it would help to clarify roles.

There was a small, but strong, feeling among some member PVOs that interactions with CAs, USAID and external organizations like the Bank only benefit the larger organizations and that collaborative proposals were developed under a cloak of secrecy. Some felt that USAID and CA’s used PVOs to promote their own agendas.

6. FORMING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER IMPACT AT FIELD LEVEL

There is much evidence to suggest that the CORE network is impacting on the building of partnerships that are having impact at field level. PVOs were asked during the survey to cite some specific examples of partnerships formed through their interactions with CORE. The forming of partnerships has not only had technical benefits, but there is evidence of better pooling of resources to avoid overlap. One PVO member made reference to a specific example *“we have been able to share resources with other PVOs which has saved money and avoided overlap. For example, we collaborated with IEF to hire a consultant to work with both of us on doing our KPC studies in Bolivia.”*

PVO Partnerships Developed Through CORE Group Participation

We have learned a lot from presentations of models developed by other PVOs through CORE interactions. For example we learned about the positive deviance model in nutrition from the work of Save the Children. The model was designed through experience in Save the Children's Mozambique CS12 project by Monique Sternin through a grant from BASICS. We partnered with Save to pilot test a planning and implementation guide for childhood nutritional rehabilitation through the positive deviance approach in Tanzania. It is a good example of a model born in the field and documented well. It is simple, practical in application and effective in many locations. (Africare)

We participated in Save the Children's mid-term evaluation of its Child Survival Project in Nampual, Mozambique. This helped us in developing our M&E skills and improved our knowledge of Northern Mozambique. We also visited World Relief's office in Mozambique and met with Africare's representative in country. (Esperanca)

Through our connections at CORE we were given access to valuable on the ground contacts in Madagascar through MCDI and in Zambia through World Vision. This helped very much with our proposals and DIPs. (ADRA)

We were able to find an excellent evaluator through World Relief to conduct our mid-term evaluation. This drastically turned around our programming. Before this, the evaluations had been done by a former employee of the organization and no one wanted to say anything bad, although the program had many problems and we were able to address this following this good external evaluation. (PVO Member)

We used the network to find someone to help write our Child Survival Proposal. She came from another member PVO and also encouraged us to document and present our work in Haiti over the last decade. Before CORE we would have just kept to ourselves, but through our increasing partnerships with others and access to the network we have others to share it with –and they want to hear it! (SAWSO)

7. IMPACT OF THE NETWORK IN BUILDING OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

7.1 PVO Voice in the Priorities of USAID and International Agencies

USAID, CAs and international agencies all cited the umbrella advantage of CORE,- “one stop shopping” as one respondent termed it. This has been highly advantageous for these organizations to be able to better tap into the PVO community. It has been clear for many years now that the PVO community has on the ground experience and knowledge that gives them a comparative advantage. They can be the voice of the communities they serve and can advocate for their improved health. PVOs form the direct line of service delivery. Donors know this. UNICEF noted that the PVO/community can play a significant role in advocating for improved health of women and children because they have the experience to do this. As a group they also have significant resources.

Reaching PVOs

“The CORE group provides an effective way to reach a large number of NGOS/PVOs. Coordination with the CORE Group also provides a cohesive way to communicate between PAHO/WHO and other agencies. Strengthening such coordination between partners at all levels will contribute to the achievement of the goals of reduction of childhood mortality and morbidity.” (Dr. Yehuda Benguigui-Regional Advisor, IMCI , PAHO)

A Greater Voice for PVOs

“One of the key advantages of CORE is the fact that the CS PVO community can now speak with one voice in terms of raising awareness. For example it is now known just how powerful the PVOs are in financial terms (meaning the amount of money channeled through PVOs). This is highly significant. NGOs simply cannot be sidelined when you consider this and we are very aware of this --- and we use this in our discussions with other donors and agencies such as UNICEF.” (Global Bureau Respondent)

Mobilizing Resources for PVOs-The Polio Eradication Initiative

USAID, WHO, UNICEF, CDC and Rotary, partners in the fight against Polio recognize the important role of PVOs in eradicating the disease on the ground in remote corners of the world. The CORE Group Partners Project -Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI) was launched last year with an \$10 million dollar grant from USAID. Members of the PVO CORE community were selected to lead the project and seconded to the initiative from their organizations. An ongoing topic of discussion with USAID is the feasibility of incorporating Vitamin A capsule distribution into the national immunization day strategy. Thirteen proposals from PVOs have already been received. (Richard Scott-PEI Deputy Director)

Several PVOs in the sample reported receiving funds under this grant and noted that it builds capacity through identifying linkages in country with the MOH, USAID missions, UNICEF and WHO and encouraging PVOs to seek other funding sources in country.

“ We have won a small grant under the polio grant for Mozambique that is mission funded. It provided an umbrella under which to tap funds and has concrete tangible benefits to building the capacity of our organization as well as bringing in funding.” (PVO Member)

7.2 Increased Visibility

All those interviewed at USAID stated that the CORE network had certainly helped raise the visibility of its members. Some USAID respondents felt that CORE could do a better job in promoting the work of its members. While there was significant awareness of CORE and a high degree of visibility in some areas of the Agency, others had very little idea.

Increased Visibility of PVOs in Addressing Global Child Survival Goals

“CORE certainly has raised visibility. Let me take one very important and exciting example. We are revisiting the World Summit for Children Goals to draw attention to the achievements made in child survival this decade and the challenges still before us. The Global Bureau asked CORE to cosponsor this because PVO representation is so crucial in getting the ball rolling on the decade of CS goals. The first meeting with PVOs has just taken place in collaboration with the Population Reference Bureau, the Global Health Council and USAID. The PVOs also recognize this as a chance to promote many of their successes in child survival in fulfilling the world summit goals to their constituents and beyond”. (Global Bureau-Elizabeth Fox and Raisa Scriaboni-Consultant to the World Summit Task Force)

PVO Involvement in Activities of USAID and International Agencies

CORE has been involved in discussions with global agencies to see how PVOs might be more involved in malaria control under the Inter-agency Roll Back Malaria Campaign under WHO. The campaign is based on community efforts using treatment and prevention measures. During meetings with USAID seven CORE PVOs presented their own malaria control activities. CORE is continuing to consider initiatives it might take to involve PVOs further in the increased activities of global agencies. The recently formed Malaria Working Group will take the lead on this. (Global Bureau/CORE)

7.3 Financial Sustainability and Leveraging Resources

Most PVOs agreed that CORE should continue to seek ways to diversify its funding base. Over half the respondents thought that CORE should look at its legal status. Many thought it should be incorporated and separate from USAID. Financial viability would also mean less dependence on USAID and room to determine their own agenda. There was no consensus on this important

issue affecting the future of CORE, but clearly it is on the table for further discussion and clarification.

CORE has taken some steps to approach foundations with the intention of seeking endowments. This has to be thought through carefully. For instance, the Board and members have suggested that the Gates Foundation be approached, but there is also concern that a large donation could take over CORE and thus move it from its collaboration mandate. There is dissent within the Board about how financial sustainability should be achieved and this severely inhibits the development of a cohesive business plan, which many members feel is essential before CORE can move forward and grow.

Primary funding for CORE comes from BHR/PVC in the form of a small “seed” grant. Additional funding to CORE has come from the Global Bureau and BASICS. Steps have been taken to leverage funds through the Japanese Grassroots Mechanism following CORE participation in the US/Japan Common Agenda meetings in Tokyo in 1998. This also presented CORE the opportunity to increase the visibility of US PVOs and the CORE Group and enhance collaboration with USAID. CORE group members have been encouraged to submit applications to the Grassroots Grants Program to the Japanese Embassies for Funding.

7.4 Private Sector Collaboration

With growing corporate profits and accompanying power in many geographical areas, corporations are becoming involved in addressing community needs. Given this environment, many private organizations are now looking to organizations that have experience in addressing community issues. CORE recognizes the need to nurture these interactions and collaboration, but has no clear strategy of how to do so. Some moves are afoot to initiate and promote partnerships with corporations. Pharmaceutical companies were engaged in the Reproductive Health Meeting in 1998. Hoffman-LaRoche, BASF, Bayer and MedPharm were engaged in the micronutrient conference and a working group session was devoted to probing public/private partnerships in micronutrient supplementation. CORE also attended a meeting along with international agencies sponsored by the Bayer Corporation to discuss possible programs with insecticide treated bednets. CORE also engaged in discussions with BASICS on its own initiative to set up a public/private partnership on malaria control.

8. FUTURE OF CORE

During the survey many PVO members and CAs emphasized the positive aspects of CORE. Some concerns and suggestions for things CORE could do better were also mentioned. Much of this has been addressed in the CORE Stakeholder Study conducted by CSTS in 1999. Below are some thoughts that refer more directly to the network function of CORE and how this impacts on its members and partners. Much of what was reported during interviews has a common theme.

Membership: While all members interviewed viewed their participation in CORE positively, many members noted that they felt there was a sense of volunteer fatigue. Many have committed substantial time and in some cases resources in participating in working groups and events. There is some resistance from employers together with heavy workloads that make continued volunteer participation difficult. Most noted that it would be advantageous for CORE to address this sooner rather than later and to consider policies and actions that would assist members in balancing their workloads. Some suggested that the number of groups should be expanded, although this challenge has to be taken in the context of the constraints of the members, time, workloads and location that make it difficult for working group members to meet. Many members felt that the CORE Group should be open to all PVOs engaged in maternal child health work because of the benefits of accessing information and moving towards standardization of programming interventions. How this would be done was not suggested. All members wanted to see CORE continue.

Staffing: Members and cooperating agencies strongly felt that CORE's staff is too small and inhibits what CORE could achieve. There was a vote of confidence in the current CORE management, but members noted that there was simply not enough staff for the workload and this was primarily a budget issue. CORE staff themselves noted that discussions are underway with BASICS to discuss funding of a technical person. Administrative support at CORE was thought to be lacking.

Competition and Transparency: A large number of respondents noted that CORE should not become an implementer, principally because this would make it in direct competition with its members. Some felt the polio initiative left them feeling confused about CORE's role. On the whole, while there were some that felt this was a bad idea, most felt that it was a question of clarifying CORE's mission to its members and being totally transparent in its workings. There was some suspicion regarding who wins grants and regarding CORE's relationship with USAID. There was also some discontent at the functioning of the Board and how the Board gets elected.

Clarification of Roles: Both members and CAs felt there should be a clarification of roles between CAs and the CORE Group and perhaps the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two. USAID respondents thought that they could interact better with CORE PVOs if there was some kind of mechanism in place to provide USAID with information about the individual PVOs.

Status of CORE: All respondents thought that the legal standing of CORE needed to be addressed. There was no consensus on whether CORE should become incorporated. More than half felt that CORE should be independent from USAID. Many felt that CORE should take a

good look at other business association models that have members. All felt that CORE needed a clear strategic direction.

The Role of CORE: Respondents agreed that CORE's primary role should be:

- Facilitation,
- Coordination
- Sharing and documenting best practices
- Raising awareness
- Fundraising on behalf of members

ANNEX A

Conceptual Framework for Interviews with CORE PVO Members

ANNEX A

Conceptual Framework for Interviews with CORE PVO Members

Name of organization:

Date:

Location of organization:

Size of organization:

Large: >\$25 million yearly cash income

Medium: \$10-\$25 yearly cash income

Small: < \$9 million yearly cash income

Name of individual completing interview:

Contact telephone no:

E-mail address:

Participation in the CORE Group:

ACTIVITY	YES	NO
Active in the CORE Group?		
New to CORE (recent grant recipient)		
Member of CORE Board or Executive Committee		
Member of a CORE Working Group		
Chair of a Working Group (cite which groups)		
Attended CORE Annual Meetings		
Attended CORE workshops or conferences		
Presented at CORE meetings		
Used publications/listings/emails/website put out by CORE		
Used CORE to access technical information		
Used technical materials/models from presentations or Working Groups		

1. What have been the key overall benefits of being CORE members to you and your organization?
2. Do you use the CORE website or other sources of information? Do you receive and utilize CORE mailings?
3. If a member of a Working Group-what have been the benefits of participating in these groups?
4. Have you attended workshops or conferences sponsored by CORE. What have been the benefits to your organization and field projects from attending these meeting?
5. Have you formed partnerships with other PVOs or other organizations through the network that have impacted on your work, grants and/or projects. Can you cite examples of partnerships developed, resources shared or funds leveraged?
6. Has anything that you have learned or gained by being engaged in the CORE network fed back into your organizational development both at HQ/field? The way you do your DIPs/proposals/workplans/evaluations.

7. Have you been able to access certain tools, information or material that has been particularly useful in your projects? Have you received TA from CAs or from USAID? If so specify what:
8. Have you improved your technical capacity as a result of CORE efforts and how is this impacting at field level?
9. Do you feel that PVOs have achieved a greater voice and visibility and their potential as partners with USAID and other donors?
10. Do you think CORE should be financially sustainable? How should this be achieved?
11. Should CORE take on umbrella grants such as the Polio Eradication? Has your organization participated in this?
12. Comments on challenges faced by CORE/concerns you have in engaging in the network
13. Comments on the future of CORE.
14. What should be the main function of CORE?

Conceptual Framework for Interviews with USAID and Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating Agencies

1. Has the CORE Network improved the working relationship between PVOs and the CAs?
2. Has there been an increase in the number of PVOs requiring technical input from the CAs? How have the CAs benefited from working with the PVO community?
3. Has the technical capacity of CORE member PVOs improved?
4. Comments of the future of CORE.

USAID-Global and Regional Bureaus

1. Is there any evidence that PVOs have gained a greater voice in operations, workplans and priorities of the Global Bureau as a result of CORE?
2. Has PVO liaison in the Global Bureau increased as a result of CORE?
3. Has the Network increased the visibility of PVO achievement and their potential as partners in development efforts with AID and other donor agencies?

Telephone Interview Approach

Good Morning/afternoon my name is Caroline Tanner. I am an independent consultant and I am currently working with USAID and the CORE Group to conduct a study of the network function of CORE and to document the effects it has had on building the capacity of PVO members. The information will be fed into USAID/PVC's Annual Results Review and Resource Request (R4) to illustrate the innovative approaches that PVC has used to build PVO capacity. The information you provide will also be fed back to the CORE group where appropriate.

I would like to set up a time to conduct a 20-30 minute interview with you at a time that is convenient to you. The interview is completely confidential.

Prior to Interview

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I would like to remind you that the interview is confidential. Names will not be associated with the information provided. During the interview, I will ask you to cite specific examples and will ask you specifically if you agree to be quoted on that example.

----Semi structured interview

It has been a pleasure to talk to you. Thank you for taking the time today to talk to me today.

ANNEX B
SCOPE OF WORK

ANNEX B

SCOPE OF WORK CORE NETWORK

I. BACKGROUND

The Child Survival Collaborations and Resources Group (CORE) was formed in 1997 in response to the need for a sectoral network that would facilitate collaboration and strengthen PVO capacity as providers of Child Survival (CS) services. USAID/BHR/PVC funded the development of this network as a means to strengthen PVO capacity in a cost-effective manner.

The goal of CORE is to assist member organizations to reduce child and maternal mortality by improving health of under-served population. CORE has more than 35 PVO members. All members have participated in USAID's Child Survival Grants Program. CORE represents these PVOs and seeks to promote coordination and collaborations between the organizations as well as with outside agencies. It provides a networking function which facilitates learning between organizations and also plays an advocacy role in promoting the work of these organizations to donors, agencies, corporations, universities and the general public.

The operational objectives of the CORE cooperative agreement are:

1. Establish CORE as a viable and sustainable PVO coordination entity for the improvement of primary health care in developing countries
2. Enhance technical knowledge and skills of CORE members related to primary health care with a special focus on maternal and child health
3. *Facilitate technical exchange between CORE membership and other interested PVOs*
4. Advance national and global policies and practices to improve maternal and child health programs within and outside the PVO community via coordination and support of CORE working group
5. *Strengthen partnership between USAID and CORE members*
6. Develop and maintain communication channels to raise public awareness of Child Survival activities

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is part of a larger analytic agenda that is designed to provide PVC with supplementary data that will support existing data on PVC's strategic objectives. This information will be used in the development of PVC's annual Results Review and Resource Request (R4) to illustrate the innovative approaches that PVC has used to build PVO capacity.

Specifically, this study will look at the network function of CORE and document the effects it has had on strengthening the capacity of PVO members as providers of child survival and maternal health services. It will identify the actions taken as a result of membership in the CORE network and to the degree possible it will identify the effects that CORE activities have had on PVO members.

III. STATEMENT OF WORK

The consultant will work with BHR/PVC and the CORE Director to:

- Identify what the PVOs intended to get out of participation in network
- Document technical and operation effects of CORE network on PVO members. Specifically, PVC is interested in answering the following questions:
 - ❖ Has memberships in the network led to change in CORE members operations, programmatic approach or technical capacity?
 - Has membership in the network resulted in increased collaboration and what is the effect or impact of collaboration on the operations of member PVOs? Is there evidence that collaboration has resulted in a change in:
 - Operational Capacity
 - PVOs gain a greater voice in the operations, workplans and priorities of other USAID and cooperating agency programs (Global & regional Bureaus, flagship projects).
 - What percent of the G and regional Bureau programs have a PVO liaison as a result of CORE's advocacy?
 - Has the network increased the visibility of PVO achievement and their potential as partners in development efforts within USAID and with other donor agencies?
 - Has the network additional leverage money or resources?
 - Is there more attention in Agency arenas on PVO issues?
 - Has the network increased collaboration between the private sector and CORE members?
 - Has CORE, as an organization, become more sustainable?

Technical Capacity

- Increased access to technical assistance (TA) from other USAID programs.
 - What percent of the PVO members have received TA from G or regional Bureau programs as a result of CORE collaborative efforts.
- Increased access to technical materials targeted to PVO needs.
 - Number and percent of the CAs that developed technical materials targeted to PVOs
 - Number and percent of the PVOs that can cite using materials (lessons learned etc.) developed by CORE Working Groups.
- Received technical updating (training etc.) as a result of CORE's coordination, advocacy or collaboration with other USAID operating unites.
 - What percent of CORE members had their technical skills improved or added new skills?
- What effect did this have of the PVOs programs –(a) % that added a new technical focus or (b) changed current technical practices?

- ❖ Has the network increased the visibility of PVO achievement and potential as partners in development efforts within USAID and with other donor agencies?
 - Has the network additional leverage money or resources?
 - Is there more attention in the APR on PVO issues?
 - Has the network increased fostered collaboration between the private section and CORE members?
 - Has CORE, as an organization, become more sustainable?

IV. METHODS

Approach

The consultant will meet with PVC staff to refine and coordinate the objectives and outputs for the study, agree upon how the data and information will be summarized—set-up appropriate data summary tables and interpretation.

B. Methodology

PVC visualizes this documentation will require a series of structured, yet free flowing interviews with PVOs in the CORE network

VI. *CONSULTANT*

Roles and Responsibilities

The consultant will be responsible for:

1. Reviewing all relevant documents (to be provided by PVC and USAID)
2. Collaborating with PVC backstop (Nitin Madhav) in preparing evaluation methodology and instruments
3. Conducting interviews and/or focus group discussions and facilitate discussions and other assessment activities among selected stakeholders
4. Discussing Results with PVC staff
5. Drafting final report.
6. Incorporate comments from CORE
7. Submit report by deadline.

Qualifications

The consultant should have:

1. Excellent interviewing and communication skills
2. Experience working with PVOs
3. In depth understanding of USAID's Management for Results methodology
4. Experience in USAID funded projects
5. Extensive experience in evaluation or related field
6. Excellent organizational skills and ability to meet deadlines

VII. *SCHEDULE*

The study will require 15 person days. Delivery of final report by January 31, 2000.

